



Intrathecal Administration of Chemotherapy

How Given: Sometimes it is necessary to give chemotherapy directly into the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. This can only be done by:

- a spinal tap (lumbar puncture or L.P.) or
- an Ommaya reservoir (a dome-shaped device that is surgically placed under the skin over the skull)

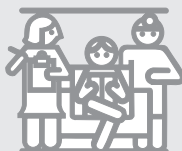
Side Effects:

1. Drugs have various side effects. They can include mild nausea, vomiting, and headaches that can occur within 1 hour after a drug is given.
2. A chemical irritation or infection of the spinal cord and brain can occur. Symptoms include back pain, fever, and headache. Other side effects that rarely occur are weakness, numbness, confusion, difficulty seeing, loss of bladder control, stiff neck, breathing difficulties, seizures, and coma.

Special Instructions:

1. After receiving chemotherapy by lumbar puncture, you will lie flat for a while (usually 1 to 2 hours). This will help prevent possible headaches and improve the spread of the drug throughout the CSF.
2. Call your NIH doctor or nurse **immediately** if you have headache, vomiting, changes in vision, dizziness, fever, back pain, extreme drowsiness, slurred speech, confusion, or seizures.

This is very important because symptoms can progress quickly and become irreversible.



This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Living with Cancer Chemotherapy Series
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